

A GOLDEN LAND: MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, THE PAHLAVI-
PENNSYLVANIA PROJECT, AND DEVELOPMENT IN IRAN

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Abstract

The period between 1958 and 1980 was a dynamic era for American universities. These postwar years witnessed a boom in area studies, encouraged by federal assistance and support from philanthropic foundations. Middle Eastern studies benefitted from the post-Sputnik increase in federal funding, becoming a significant field during the 1960s. However, by the early 1970s, institutions that traditionally financed Middle Eastern studies began to withdrawal support for the field, ushering in an existentially threatening era of resource privation. In order to maintain centers of Middle Eastern studies, scholars and administrators in the field relied on oil wealth from Muhammad Reza Shah.

This paper analyzes the unique political dynamic of Middle Eastern studies created by the participation of the shah in the financial apparatus of the field. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the shah sought to create a network between the Iranian government and American universities by donating to centers of Middle Eastern studies. As the federal government and philanthropic foundations began to withdrawal their support for Middle Eastern studies, the network between the shah and American academics became more crucial for maintaining the regional studies centers. Further, during the 1970s, administrators and scholars of Middle Eastern studies increasingly turned to oil corporations in order to support the field. The relationship between the shah and Middle Eastern studies abruptly ended following the Iranian revolution. Finally, this essay should be read as an example of the dangers of private support for a field of high geopolitical significance.

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*A Golden Land: Middle Eastern Studies, the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania Project, and
Development in Iran*

In 1979, United States government officials witnessed the fall of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in Iran with shock. According to a retrospective report from the Iran Task Force, in 1978 the Carter Administration believed that “the Shah personally commanded wide popular support throughout the country,” failing to acknowledge the “revolutionary forces” that were to bring him down.¹ The Carter Administration, according to this report, did not understand the extent to which Iranians resisted the absolute rule of the shah. Pahlavi, who introduced the so-called White Revolution to Iran in 1964, had encouraged westernization through measures such as land reform, development of educational institutions, and urban and rural modernization.² He further developed the oil industry, using revenues to build his country’s military.³ Despite these perceived economic advances, in 1977 the rule enjoyed by the shah began to crumble due to nation-wide protests, culminating two years later in the expulsion of Pahlavi and the meteoric rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.⁴

Many leading members of the American academic community did not foresee revolution in Iran and reacted with considerable surprise to the events that spanned from

¹ Iran Task Force, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, February 27, 1980. “Iran: Confrontation With the United States.” CRS-1980-FND-0024. <http://congressional.proquest.com:80/congressional/docview/t21.d22.crs-1980-fnd-0024?accountid=11752>. 2.

² Osamah Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2016), 202-203.

³ Ibid., 229.

⁴ Ibid., 203.

1978 to 1979. Mere weeks before the shah was exiled, political scientist and scholar of Middle Eastern studies George Lenczowski published a collection of essays titled *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, which included works from prominent scholars of MES such as Charles Issawi. In the book's preface, Lenczowski praised the shah for bringing Iran out of "her semimediieval slumber to become one of Asia's principal modernizing states."⁵ As evidence, Lenczowski cited the political achievements of the shah: his White Revolution "represented a broad attack in every conceivable sector against the old ills of Iranian society," and, despite setbacks, Pahlavi helped raise Iran out of its "weakness and backwardness to a higher level of strength."⁶ Lenczowski was not alone in his perception that the shah was accomplishing positive work in Iran. After the revolution, Jahangir Amuzegar, a prominent Iranian economist and scholar, recalled in a 1991 book that a "salient feature" of the Islamic revolution was its "largely unexpected emergence."⁷ The shock and rapidity of the shah's fall and Khomeini's rise were, for Amuzegar and other experts on the Middle East, defining features of the revolution. What caused the seemingly uncritical appraisals of the shah in the years before the Revolution? To what extent can we attribute American scholars' prevalent support for the shah to the unique institutional context of MES during this period?

⁵ George Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*. ed. George Lenczowski (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), ix.

⁶ Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, xxii.

⁷ Jahangir Amuzegar, *The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis' Triumph and Tragedy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 10.

Middle Eastern studies was distinguished from other area studies programs due to the abundance of oil in the Middle East, which simultaneously allowed the shah to establish a financial relationship with U.S. academics, and further allowed development theorists to argue that the Middle East could achieve economic modernity through proper allocation of petrodollars. Compared to other authoritarian leaders during the Cold War, the shah was well-positioned to leverage capital to influence American universities. The Iranian government's oil revenues, which increased dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s, endowed the shah with the financial resources to help support regional studies programs.⁸ He established a circuit between the Iranian government and American scholarship in which American universities and MES centers became relatively dependent on his financial largesse. Moreover, academics within oil-funded MES centers published scholarship which aligned with the authoritarian politics of the shah. This financial relationship was unique given that it was defined, both on the side of funding and on the side of scholarship, by the oil wealth associated with the region.

Although recent historians have observed the unique relationships between Middle Eastern studies, the U.S. federal government, and philanthropic foundations, their analyses do not fully explore the significance of oil and the relationship between the shah and American academia in this period. By focusing attention on the effects of petroleum on MES, we can better understand how and why the political dynamic of the field diverged from other area studies disciplines.

⁸ Hadi Salehi Esfahani and M. Hashem Pesaran, "The Iranian economy in the twentieth century: A global perspective," *Iranian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2009): 10.

Zachary Lockman and Osamah Khalil, two contemporary historians of Middle Eastern studies, have recently released books exploring the unique dynamic of the field relative to other area studies disciplines. Khalil, in *America's Dream Palace*, maintains that the national security state influenced the development of the regional studies discipline during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. He begins his analysis with wartime intelligence agencies such as the Office of the Coordinator of Information and the Office of Strategic Services, both of which supplied the U.S. government with expertise on the Middle East and fostered personal networks that bridged academia and the U.S. government.⁹ He notes the elaborate interactions between “the U.S. government and academic societies, universities, private foundations, and corporations” during this period.¹⁰ Further, after the passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, both Middle Eastern studies and area studies writ large flourished due to an influx of federal support, which President Eisenhower directed toward American universities with the specific intention of producing knowledge that would be relevant to America’s so-called ideological battle against Communism.¹¹

The intellectual and ideological harmony between scholars of MES and architects of American foreign policy was another facet of the broader Cold War significance of MES. Khalil recognizes the link between the field of MES and modernization theory, arguing that many scholars largely supported the westernization and modernization of the

⁹ Osamah Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle Eastern Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 40-41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Middle East. A guiding ideology for American foreign policy architects in the 1960s, modernization theory aimed at containing the threat of communism while simultaneously increasing the spread of American geopolitical influence overseas. Walt Whitman Rostow is credited with the theory's first full elaboration in *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. His central work outlined a five-stage-process for linear economic growth of non-industrialized countries. According to Rostow's theory, the economy of a society developed initially based on external demand from industrialized countries for raw materials, ultimately resulting in a 'take off' point after which economic growth becomes self-sustained. For Rostow, the goal of such social, political, and economic changes in underdeveloped countries was the condition of modernity.¹²

Khalil moreover demonstrates that the dominant social science paradigm of modernization theory in many ways relied on the scholarship of MES. In his analysis, which is centered around the ties between the U.S. foreign intelligence apparatus and MES, Khalil contends that proponents of modernization developed their theories based on research conducted on and in the Middle East. For example, David Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, which was published in 1958, provided a model for the 'application' of modernization theory in a regional context, and influenced a decade of theorists who wrote about the psychological effects of mass media and transportation on the so-called traditional societies in the Middle East. What is more, the "intellectual origins of modernization theory" were largely rooted in

¹² W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 4-12.

“research surveys conducted by Columbia University’s Bureau for Applied Social Research” and “Voice of America (VOA) in the Middle East.”¹³ In brief, research on the Middle East played an important role in the development of the theory. Although Khalil recognizes the connection between modernization theory and MES, he does not properly acknowledge the importance many development economists placed on oil itself for the modernization of the Middle East. For many of the scholars within centers of MES, development would have been impossible in the Middle East without the financial resources granted by oil and the authoritarian leadership offered by figures such as the shah. Thus, aside from helping centers of MES stay open during the 1970s, oil also undergirded the intellectual and ideological harmony between scholars, the U.S. government, and the shah.

Apart from the federal government, other traditional sources such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations bolstered Middle Eastern studies during the 1960s. In an effort to help promote the United States’ globalist ambitions during the Cold War, leaders of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations helped build area studies programs that could provide expertise on foreign policy.¹⁴ The Ford Foundation supported anticommunist efforts in Indonesia, Nigeria, and Chile, and moreover contributed to the development of Asian, African, and Latin American studies centers.¹⁵ The same holds true for Middle Eastern studies. Osamah Khalil writes that beginning in the early 1950s, the Ford and Rockefeller

¹³ Khalil. *America’s Dream Palace*, 183.

¹⁴ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Ibid.

Foundations became major patrons of Middle Eastern studies, helping develop institutions such as Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.¹⁶ Zachary Lockman, too, analyzes the role of the Ford and Rockefeller foundations in the development of Middle Eastern studies in America. He holds the Ford and Rockefeller foundations "helped accelerate the expansion of Middle Eastern studies" beginning in the mid-1950s.¹⁷ While these works provide significant discussion of the role of foundations in the development of Middle Eastern studies, they nevertheless do not address the fact that the major foundations supported MES centers to a lesser degree than to other area studies programs. As the foundations' support for area studies waned in the late 1960s and 1970s, university administrators increasingly turned to private sources, rendering oil wealth more crucial to MES centers in the 1970s.

This is not to say that Khalil and Lockman ignore oil and the shah in their analysis of Middle Eastern studies. For example, Khalil's discussion of oil wealth and MES is tangential to his central argument about the overlapping histories of Middle Eastern studies and the national security state.¹⁸ Further, although Lockman discusses the role of oil and the shah in MES centers, he presents this relationship as one of many sources of tension for MES centers during the 1970s, alongside intellectual disagreements and political polarization. Thus, although Lockman and Khalil address the role of oil and the

¹⁶ Osamah Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 167-169.

¹⁷ Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford University Press, 2016), Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 3174-3178.

¹⁸ Khalil, *America's Dream Palace*, 229-232.

shah in MES, they orient their analysis in ways that do not fully address the significance of this relationship on the unique political dynamic of the field. The atmosphere of resource deprivation in MES centers, and the connections between American academics and the resource-rich Iranian government, rendered oil wealth significant to the regional studies field.

The role of oil and the shah on the development of Middle Eastern studies centers was not peripheral to a broader, more important story about the relationship between MES, the national security state, and private foundations. Rather, oil and the shah played a significant role in the development of the field, creating a unique political dynamic that further distinguished Middle Eastern studies from other area studies disciplines between 1960 and 1979. The story of the shah's involvement in American academia began in the mid-1950s, when he initiated connections with both the centers of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, as well as entire institutions of higher education, namely the University of Pennsylvania. During this period, scholars of Middle Eastern studies, such as William Polk at the University of Chicago and J.C. Hurewitz and Charles Issawi at Columbia University, sought to build a field centered around development and modernization, both of which were major policy goals of Pahlavi. Further, the relationship between the University of Pennsylvania and Pahlavi University - fostered by University of Pennsylvania administrators Max Copeland, Martin Meyerson, and Gaylord Harnwell - was part and parcel of modernization in Iran, aided by the U.S. government. As the federal government and private foundations began

to withdrawal from their role as the main financiers of knowledge production on the Middle East, private sources such as the shah and oil corporations became increasingly significant for maintaining the day-to-day operations of MES centers. Thus the history of MES in the 1960s and 1970s not only demonstrates the importance of oil for both the scholarship and funding of the field, but also can be read as an example of the early privatization of university funding that began during President Nixon's administration.

I

The histories of the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, and Columbia University demonstrate that American universities were associated with the modernizing governments of the Middle East. At the University of Chicago and Columbia University, the shah and scholars of Middle Eastern studies cultivated an informal relationship. American scholars of Middle Eastern studies sought to associate with the shah, and vice versa. Meanwhile, in 1962, the University of Pennsylvania signed a contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Pahlavi University.¹⁹ From 1962 to 1978, Pennsylvania helped develop the faculty and resources at Pahlavi University to resemble more closely American universities, in exchange for annual grants from Pahlavi. In 1971, the administration at Pahlavi University signed a new contract with the University of Pennsylvania which bypassed USAID and allowed the two institutions to have a more direct relationship. During this period, a team of administrators and professors at Pennsylvania helped develop the

¹⁹ Gaylord P. Harnwell to Dr. William D. McElroy. February 20, 1970. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs. Iran-Pahlavi University.

School of Medicine, the College of Agriculture, and the College of Arts and Sciences at Pahlavi University in Shiraz.

Although the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania partnership and MES encouraged development in Iran in different ways, the relationship between the shah and MES nevertheless overlapped with the history of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania project. American academics at these three institutions were active agents in the economic development of Iran under Pahlavi's rule beginning around 1958. At this time, the shah visited Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Columbia with the intention of stimulating growth in Iran by both encouraging MES programs to develop expertise on development and by helping the technical development of Iranian universities through international academic partnerships. Compared to other regional studies programs, MES was particularly open to influence from foreign governments given the financial constraints faced by MES centers, the extreme wealth of the shah, and his willingness to donate large sums to regional studies in America. In the early years of the field, scholars of MES at Chicago and Columbia fleshed out a field distinct from Oriental studies, praised the shah's so-called White Revolution, and overlooked many of the elements of the Pahlavi regime that would eventually engulf Iran in revolution. They did so at a time when the federal government and private foundations still actively encouraged knowledge production through financial support.

The establishment of a coalition between Iranian officials and academics in America took place alongside fundamental transformations of American universities.

Since the end of the Second World War, an influx of federal funding into research catapulted universities into the national spotlight as important centers for research and development that aligned with the needs of the American Cold War policy.²⁰ At the same time, large-scale philanthropic foundations such as the Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie Foundations played an active role in the development of foreign policy and social sciences, cultivating an ethos of ‘Americanism’ both in the United States and abroad.²¹ The emergence of MES occurred during these postwar shifts of American higher education and the university’s role in the domestic economy, as many programs in the United States enjoyed donations from philanthropic foundations as well as from the United States Department of Education.²² A driving force behind these changes was the intellectual mobilization of American resources against the global spread of communism.

Further, American universities and institutions in the Third World formed relationships in order to encourage modernization and development, and these relationships were another significant development of American higher education in the context of the Cold War. For example, the University of Indonesia and the University of California at Berkeley formed a partnership in order to help train economists and influence economic development in Indonesia.²³ The primary purpose of this partnership was to prevent the spread of communism in South Asia. Furthermore, the relationship

²⁰ Margaret Pugh O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 58.

²¹ Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the Twentieth Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

²² Osamah Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace*, 167-169.

²³ Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 19.

between the Universidad Católica de Chile and the University of Chicago helped export market-centric economic thought from the Chicago School of Economics, aiding the U.S.-supported General Pinochet in his fight against the “alien ideas” of Marxism.²⁴ Chile was, like Indonesia, another crucial region for America’s perceived strategic interests: in 1973, the Central Intelligence Agency organized the overthrow of President Salvador Allende, a member of the Chilean Socialist party who threatened to undermine America’s geopolitical dominance in the Western hemisphere.²⁵ Thus, Chile became another linchpin of the Cold War in which the American impulse for global ideological and political consensus manifested itself in violent conflict and a military dictatorship. In brief, the relationship between Pahlavi and Pennsylvania is part of a larger trend in which American institutions formed partnerships with universities in the Third World in order to encourage technological and economic development and to mitigate against the spread of communism in the developing world.

Compared to other countries in the Middle East, Iran was an especially significant strategic partnership for the United States during the Cold War period; the fundamental shift to a global oil economy put Middle Eastern petroleum at the center of Western modernity. During the First World War, the British Royal Navy switched to oil for its primary source of energy, and other navies followed.²⁶ By 1960, oil surpassed coal as the

²⁴ Juan Gabriel Valdés, *Pinochet’s Economists: The Chicago School in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 12.

²⁵ Valdés, *Pinochet’s Economists*, 7.

²⁶ Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (New York: Verso Books, 2013), 63.

key energy source as Americans become increasingly networked. Suburbanization, development of automobile technology, and improvements in the transportation infrastructure of the country moreover both allowed for and necessitated this transformation to a fuel economy.²⁷ The Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 further marked the increasing global reliance on primarily Middle Eastern oil. In the agreement which established international financial and commercial relations, delegates effectively tied the value of the dollar to the flow of oil, given that oil, the basis of the postwar economy, was traded in U.S. dollars.²⁸ Oil thus powered postwar Western economic and social modernity, placing the Middle East and Iran in a region of crucial geopolitical significance for the United States.

Both the strategic importance of oil, as well as the desire to combat the spread of communism, undergirded America's close relationship with Iran. By the end of the Second World War, the United States had a "strategic foothold and access to Iranian oil," whereas the Soviet Union sought and failed to obtain a similar relationship.²⁹ In 1953, after the moderate socialist Mohammad Mosaddegh was elected to be the Prime Minister of Iran, the Central Intelligence Agency helped organize a coup that overthrew Mosaddegh and strengthened the regime of Muhammad Reza Shah, whose authoritarian rule would hinder the spread of communism in the underbelly of the Soviet Union.³⁰

²⁷ Robert Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The U.S. Standard of Living Since the Civil War* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

²⁸ Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*, 111.

²⁹ Rashid Khalidi. *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 69.

³⁰ Khalidi. *Sowing Crisis*, 21.

After the coup, dubbed Operation Ajax, the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations deepened the relationship between Iran, sending economic aid to help develop the country. Indeed, the shah insisted that “he could not even think about joining a regional defense group” without a “multimillion-dollar U.S. military aid package.”³¹ Eventually, Congress passed a bill which allowed Eisenhower “to use military force and \$200 million in economic aid to support any nation in the Middle East,” including those in Iran, which constituted one of the best regional defenses against the Soviet Union.³² Under Johnson’s administration, Iran became one of the “two pillars” of security in the Persian Gulf region.³³ The U.S.-Iranian relationship manifested itself in academia as well, which, much like the U.S. government of the Cold War, was similarly interested in the development of the Middle East.

At the same time the the shah established a relationship between American academia and the Iranian government, the United States government also sought to increase support for area studies, helping usher in a boom period for MES. In 1958, President Eisenhower signed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which placed higher education became a significant pillar for the national security state.³⁴ Title VI of the NDEA called for funding for Language and Area Centers that could train students in languages “needed by the Federal Government or by business, industry, or education in

³¹ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 3rd edition, 129.

³² Little, *American Orientalism*, 133.

³³ Little, *American Orientalism*, 140.

³⁴ Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States*. Location 1318 of 7949.

the United States,” and could furthermore instruct students on “fields such as history, political science, linguistics, economics, sociology, geography, and anthropology.” The bill was directly relevant to Eisenhower’s Cold War interests, given that the NDEA required recipients of federal funding to sign an affidavit affirming that “he does not believe in, and is not a member of and does not support any organization that believes in or teaches, the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence or by any illegal or unconstitutional methods.”³⁵

Further, members of the U.S. foreign intelligence branches helped create the field of Middle Eastern studies during the postwar period, as prominent scholars of MES at Columbia University and the University of Chicago established programs which would align their policies with United States foreign policy interests. William Polk from the University of Chicago, and J.C. Hurewitz from Columbia University were two such academics, embedded in both the U.S. foreign policy branch and midcentury academia. Before entering the university, Hurewitz worked in the Office of the Coordinator of Information, a wartime agency responsible for providing American foreign policy architects with expertise.³⁶ After working in U.S. foreign intelligence, Hurewitz moved to Columbia to open the Middle East Institute (MEI) in 1954. Polk, meanwhile, lectured in Arabic studies at Harvard during the 1950s, and subsequently worked in the Policy

³⁵ The full text of the National Defense Education Act is at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-72/pdf/STATUTE-72-Pg1580.pdf>

³⁶ Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace*, 43.

Planning Council at President Kennedy's State Department.³⁷ Almost ten years after Hurewitz had opened his department in Columbia, Polk left the State Department to open the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) in 1964. Finally, Max Copeland, who oversaw the exchange between Pahlavi and Pennsylvania, was the first American to be arrested during the Iranian revolution. Copeland was charged with acting as an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency during the 1970s. Although it is unclear whether the allegations against him are accurate, his son wrote an investigative memoir in which he concluded that the accusations were likely true.³⁸ In short, the extent to which Hurewitz, Polk, and Copeland freely moved between the government and the university indicates the overlap between the two spheres during the Cold War.

J.C. Hurewitz placed development at the center of the MEI's agenda. In order to correct the perceived deficiencies of Oriental studies at Columbia, Hurewitz recruited prominent social scientists from Turkey, Pakistan, Egypt, and Iran to the MEI. Among the scholars included included the Western-educated development economist Ömer Celac Sarç, political scientist Serif Mardin, and economist and economic historian Charles Issawi.³⁹ Hurewitz, in 1964, wrote that his program "resembles a development program. In fact, it might amply be dubbed an American development program for our own

³⁷ Nathan J. Citno, "The 'crush' of ideologies: the United States, the Arab world, and Cold War modernization," *Cold War History* 12, no. 1 (2012): 92.

³⁸ Cyrus Copeland, *Off the Radar: A Father's Secret, A Mother's Heroism, and a Son's Quest* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2015), 315.

³⁹ J.C. Hurewitz, "The Education of J.C. Hurewitz," in *Paths to the Middle East: Ten Scholars Look Back*, ed. Thomas Naff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993): 81-83.

underdeveloped studies of the underdeveloped areas of the world.”⁴⁰ Further, in a retrospective memoir chapter written in 1993, Hurewitz explained how modernization and development was a central component of the MEI, and that Hurewitz and Issawi “put the hybrid discipline to work on Middle East oil” beginning in the later half of the 1950s.⁴¹ In brief, Hurewitz, like Polk, insisted that development was an academic priority of his program.

Ten years later, Polk opened the CMES in Chicago and similarly placed development and modernization at the center of the CMES’s agenda. In 1966, Polk organized a conference on the “beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East in the 19th Century” in which central scholars studying foreign intervention, modernization, education, and social development could meet in order to elaborate how they believed the processes of modernization should look when ‘applied’ to nation-states. Among those present were development scholars such as Ottoman historian Stanford Shaw and economic historian Charles Issawi. At the conference, key figures in the field presented papers on the erosion of traditional economic systems, increasing urbanization in the region, trade routes, and education.⁴² Although the conference focused exclusively on the nineteenth century, Polk believed that these issues were useful in a contemporary context

⁴⁰ J.C. Hurewitz. ‘Undergraduate Foreign Area Studies: The Case of the Middle East—Report on a Conference,’ *American Council of Learned Societies Newsletter* 15, no. 4 (April 1965), p. 4. Cited in Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001), 13.

⁴¹ Hurewitz, “The Education of J.C. Hurewitz,” 84.

⁴² Polk. ‘Conference on the Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East’, University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 79, Folder 9], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

given that they provided “a simpler model of 20th century complexities,” and that the meeting was an opportunity for prominent scholars in the field to define the process of modernization. The papers of the conference were published in a book titled *The Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, and were well-received within the field of MES. Norman Itzkowitz, a prominent historian in the field, and Michael Hudson, a political scientist, both reviewed the papers from the conference favorably, writing that the collection of papers on modernization “is an auspicious beginning for the new series from the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.”⁴³

The shah similarly had modernization in mind when he visited American universities, seeking to create a network between American universities and higher education in Iran. One year after the creation of the Middle East Institute at Columbia University in 1954, and two years after the execution of Operation Ajax, the president of Columbia invited the shah to New York to receive an honorary law degree. During his visit, the shah spoke at a lecture sponsored by the School of International Studies, praising the Institute and announcing his funding of a smaller-scale Iranian studies institute within the MEI that would receive gifts from Tehran. He claimed that the United States was in “a position to pay some of its debt to the East in technology and industrial skill, and in the political doctrines and application of democracy.”⁴⁴ One way the United States can do this, according to the shah, was through educating Iranians. Iranian students

⁴³ Michael Hudson. Review of :*Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*” in *Middle East Journal*. Vol. 24, no. 1 (1970): 91-92.

⁴⁴ Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, February 4, 1955. Central Files, Series I: 1850-1971. General Silver Lectures. M.R.S. Pahlavi, 1954-1955.

in America, according to the shah, “have, in no small measure, played a part in the social and national awareness and modernization of Iran.”⁴⁵ By funding the Iranian Studies center within the MEI, the shah hoped that Iranians would be able to “find the light on the threshold of Columbia.”⁴⁶ The shah further countered the so-called “brain drain” by sponsoring an “American-style University in Iran” that could help keep educated Iranians within national borders. Thus, in order to help Iran more closely resemble Western powers, the shah sought both to develop Iranian universities and the study of Iran at American universities.

In 1958, the Pahlavi regime asked educators at the University of Pennsylvania “to survey several Iranian Universities and determine which institutions might be most appropriately transferred into an American-style university.”⁴⁷ This, Pahlavi believed, would help educators select an institution to develop according to the Western model. Their study, titled “A Pattern for a New University in Iran,” identified the University of Shiraz given the previous existence of a medical school on the campus. After another two years the Iranian Majlis transformed the University of Shiraz into Pahlavi University, establishing “a free and independent institution financed by the Iranian government and student tuition fees.”⁴⁸ The United States Agency for International Development moreover signed a contract between Pahlavi and Pennsylvania for 1962-1967, in which

⁴⁵ Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, February 4, 1955. Central Files, Series I: 1850-1971. General Silver Lectures. M.R.S. Pahlavi, 1954-1955.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, February 4, 1955. Central Files, Series I: 1850-1971. General Silver Lectures. M.R.S. Pahlavi, 1954-1955.

⁴⁷ W.A. Copeland to Erwin Graue, August 4, 1965. Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, fol. 11. Iran-Pahlavi University Agreement. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Pahlavi University sent money to the University of Pennsylvania in return for the Pennsylvania-sponsored “growth and development at Pahlavi.”⁴⁹ Under the initial contract, a team at Pennsylvania helped hire faculty members for Pahlavi, playing a highly influential role in the development of departments such as the “archeology, anthropology, fine arts and the history of art, literature,” as well as the medical school, the veterinary school, the agricultural school, and the field of engineering.⁵⁰ In short, the shah sought to utilize American academic resources in order to combat the brain drain, help establish an American-style university in Iran, and ultimately help Iran more closely resemble its Western models. The Pennsylvania-Pahlavi contract was a major step forward in this effort.

The relationship between the Pahlavi regime and American academics, forged between 1955 and 1965 with the intent of encouraging Iranian modernization, emerged in three significant ways. First, and most directly, donations flowed from Tehran to Columbia and Chicago, helping maintain Middle Eastern studies during a period of financial limitations. Scholars of MES would have been particularly interested in a wealthy benefactor such as the shah given the financial constraints of MES centers. Second, university administrators in Pennsylvania helped develop professional schools in Shiraz, exporting American scientific and technical mastery to Iran in order to encourage university development. Third, American scholars of MES published works that either

⁴⁹ Hooshang Nahavandi to Martin Meyerson, June 28, 1971. Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, fol. 11. Iran-Pahlavi University Agreement. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

encouraged the modernization of Iran using oil wealth or, in extreme instances, outwardly praised Pahlavi for his efforts to bring Western-style modernity to Iran. In other words, scholars of MES encouraged modernization in Iran, with very few critiques of the major development paradigm emerging within the network of American MES and Iranian officials.

The connection between the shah and MES programs tangibly manifested itself in the form of hard cash from the Pahlavi regime. Although some of the donations from Iran seem relatively small, they were nevertheless meaningful given the financial constraints of centers for Middle Eastern studies. The participation of oil-rich governments in the funding apparatus of MES programs differentiate the field from other regional studies centers during this period.

Both the shah's high oil revenue, and his willingness to share some of that revenue with universities in America, justified the administrators' belief that Iran could or would donate money for Iranian studies in America. Indeed, since 1960, oil production in Iran had blossomed, giving the government the revenue it needed to initiate the reforms of the White Revolution. As the Iranian government increased oil prices fourfold in the 1970s, Iran became even more dependent on oil for domestic spending.⁵¹ Thus, government revenue due to the increasing importance of the oil commodity put the shah in a strategic position to act as a benefactor for regional studies in America.

⁵¹ April R. Summitt, "For a White Revolution: John F. Kennedy and the Shah of Iran," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 4 (2004): 572, accessed March 25th, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330063>.

Further, the shah had a history of sharing oil wealth with American universities. In 1967 he committed \$3 million to build a proposed Shahanshah Aria Mehr Center for Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies on the University of Chicago's campus.⁵² Abdolmajid Majidi, the Iranian Deputy Prime Minister and Director of the Central Budget Bureau at the Iranian Plan Organization, wrote to Polk in the same year, claiming that "such undertaking will augment the fulfillment of closer understanding of each other's cultural heritage and will further expand the friendship of our two Nations."⁵³ In other words, Majidi saw the Pahlavi building as a small-scale manifestation of the goodwill between the governments of Iran and the United States. Moreover, the new Pahlavi-funded building in Chicago reflected an academic turn toward development and modernization in Middle Eastern studies. After receiving funding from the shah, Polk discussed an announcement dinner to which he would invite leading MES scholars, U.S. government officials, ambassadors from Iran, and the "leaders of major American corporations interested in the economic development of the Middle East..."⁵⁴ Perceiving economic development to be one of the fundamental academic purposes of the CMES, Polk planned to invite those invested in the development of the Middle East to the Pahlavi center. Finally, Polk recognized the link between the shah's gifts to American MES and his

⁵² Edward Levi to Nephtali H. Knox, February 6, 1967. University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 67, Folder 17], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁵³ University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 67, Folder 17], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁵⁴ William Polk. 'A Public Relations Plan for William R. Polk's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.' University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 67, Folder 17], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

program to develop education in Iran. In 1968, he wrote that the “shah’s great efforts in education at home have now been supplemented by his concern for helping to advance knowledge here.”⁵⁵ The building would, in short, help tighten the relationship between the United States and Iran, give a physical space to the development-oriented CMES, and would complement the development of higher education in Iran.

Polk’s ambitious efforts to construct a Pahlavi building in Chicago eventually failed. The Iranian government officially rescinded its donation in 1971, after administrators at Chicago requested more funds. Jahangir Amuzegar of the Iranian Economic Mission explained that “the University has recently asked the Iranian Government for additional funds over the \$3 million original donation” in order to “use the whole amount for purposes other than the original objectives.”⁵⁶ For these reasons, the government chose to withdraw the financial support to the University of Chicago.

Despite the failure of Polk to obtain funds from Iran, the shah nevertheless funded other regional studies programs in the U.S. According to Osamah Khalil, he made contributions to fifty-five higher educational institutions, and some members of his administration and family served on university boards.⁵⁷ At Columbia, he periodically sent between \$5,000 and \$8,000 to the Center for Iranian Studies, which shared an

⁵⁵ Memorandum, June 13, 1968. University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 66, Folder 4], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁵⁶ Jahangir Amuzegar to Edward Levi, February 8, 1971. University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 68, Folder 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁵⁷ Osamah Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace*, 229.

administrative staff with the MEI.⁵⁸ Although this was a small sum compared to donations from large-scale philanthropic institutions, these gifts became much more significant as federal and philanthropic support receded during the 1970s. Finally, part of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania-USAID contract dictated that Pahlavi University, which had been converted by Iranian Majdis to a state-funded university following the recommendation of developers in Pennsylvania, send money to the University of Pennsylvania in response for assistance with the development of Pahlavi University.⁵⁹ This partnership was thus a formal version of the relationship between Pahlavi and MES: funding flowed from Tehran to America in exchange for assistance with national development.

A second manifestation of the U.S.-Iranian academic relationship was the extent to which professors and students traveled from Iran to America, and from America to Iran. After 1950, Iranian students in the United States proliferated; this process was aided by the shah's relationship with schools such as the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania. During this period, many Iranians left the Middle East for American universities "and returned to contribute to the shah's program of rapid socioeconomic modernization," given that a large number of American-educated Iranians "were elected to the majlis, entered the shah's bureaucracy, staffed the Plan

⁵⁸ William McGill to Nasser Shirzad, February 1, 1978. Central Files, Series VIII: Box 812, Regional Institutes and Iran. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁵⁹ "A Proposal to His Imperial Majesty Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shahanashah of Iran, on behalf of the University of Pennsylvania." May 1975. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Inter-Institutional Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University II. Box 296, folder 8. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

Organization and the National Iranian Oil Company, [or] worked in the financial sector...”⁶⁰ In other words, American-educated Iranians proved to be valuable assets for the shah, who escalated his project of economic development in 1964. Moreover J.C. Hurewitz estimated that one fourth of the students at the Middle East Institute “come from the Middle East itself,” including a large proportion from Iran.⁶¹ In a 1975 article, Edward Fiske, an education writer, noted the related increase in Iranian students at American universities as well as a “five-year joint educational program” between Georgetown University and Ferdowsi University in Iran, one of many academic partnerships that accompanied the increase in the number of students in this country.⁶² The number of students enrolled in MES programs increased in part due to the efforts of the Iranian government.

As students increasingly utilized American academic resources, administrators and developers in America similarly sent American-educated scholars to Shiraz in order to encourage the technical development of Pahlavi University. In 1970, Gaylord Harnwell at the University of Pennsylvania cited the accomplishments of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania project since its initiation in 1962. He praised the Pennsylvania team for sending to Shiraz the applications of “approximately 310 Iranians in the fields of engineering (83), medicine (58), agriculture (50), and arts and sciences (119),” making up about “18% of

⁶⁰ Shannon, “American-Iranian Alliances,” 662.

⁶¹ J.C. Hurewitz to Charles Hedlund, October 30, 1974. Central Files, Series V: 1974-1975. Box 756, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁶² Edward Fiske, “Arab and Iranian Students Increasing at U.S. Colleges,” *New York Times*, March 28, 1975, accessed February 2, 2017, <https://nyti.ms/2kyanNQ>

the total Iranian graduate student population in the United States.” Regarding the other purpose of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania contract, to hire American-educated professors directly for Pahlavi, the Pennsylvania team made significant headway as well, sending “the applications of 84 persons, primarily Americans, who were interested in direct-hire appointments.”⁶³ The Pahlavi-Pennsylvania project, in short, made significant advances in its overarching goal of exporting American-based expertise to Shiraz.

Alongside the medical and technical programs, university developers in Philadelphia also sought to export social sciences to Shiraz. The Pennsylvania team, which included Max Copeland and Arthur H. Doerr, wanted to build a program in economics that instructed students based on Keynesian methods. After unsuccessful interviews with various candidates, Copeland and the Pennsylvania team eventually turned to Taghi Kermani, an associate professor of development economics at Youngstown University. In November of 1965, Deihl, who required that professors taught ‘New Economics’ to students in Shiraz, requested that Copeland contact Kermani specifically regarding the open faculty position. After meeting with other members of the Pennsylvania team, Charles Babcock, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, concluded that he was “much impressed by [Kermani’s] personal qualities, and I am convinced of his interest in coming to Shiraz.”⁶⁴ In 1959, Kermani finished his

⁶³ Gaylord Harnwell to Hooshang Nahavandi, January 28, 1970. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

⁶⁴ Charles Babcock to Lincoln Deihl, November 18, 1965. Pahlavi University Records. UPB107:0006. Economics Recruitment Folders. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

dissertation, titled *The United States Participation in the Economic Development in the Middle East*, associating him with the kind of United States-aided development intended by the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania contract. Lincoln Deihl requested that Taghi Kermani reach out to Copeland for a position and, one year later, Kermani became the head of the Economics Department in Shiraz.⁶⁵

The selection of Kermani over other potential candidates illustrates that Copeland and Deihl not only sought to develop the Department of Economics in Shiraz, but intended to recruit American economists of a particular ideological sensibility. Kermani conformed to the ‘New Economics,’ specializing in development in the Middle East. Moreover, his subsequent publication record reflects the Pennsylvania-Pahlavi commitment to modernization in the region. One year after Kermani was recruited to Pahlavi, in 1967, he published a book titled *Economic Development in Action: Theories, Problems, and Procedures as Applied in the Middle East*. In his preface, Kermani identified the distance between theories of economic development and the socioeconomic realities of the Middle East. He insisted that his book “seeks to bring most existing theories of economic development into contact with reality as it exists in the Middle East” and moreover “[introduce] the role of foreign assistance in the process of economic development in the area.”⁶⁶ In a section in which Kermani discussed major theories of economic development, including the Keynesian model and the theories of

⁶⁵ “A Guide to Pahlavi University: 1968-1969.” Pahlavi University Records. UPB107:0007. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

⁶⁶ Taghi Kermani. *Economic Development in Action: Theories, Problems, and Procedures as Applied in the Middle East* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1967), ix.

Albert Hirschmann, Ragnar Nurkse, and W.W. Rostow, he concluded that “among most historical theories of growth, Rostow’s stage theory is probably the most likely to apply in the Middle East.”⁶⁷ He wrote that countries in the Middle East had been experiencing social and economic growth due to contact with the West, and that this growth had set the “preconditions for take off” elaborated by Rostow, causing revolution in some instances and reform in others. Finally, Kermani compared the White Revolution favorably to other social revolutions in the Middle East, claiming that the shah’s style of “evolutionary reform” was “more likely to meet success in the Middle East than revolution,” given that evolution was “usually accompanied by some degree of the political and economic stability desperately needed.”⁶⁸ Invoking the need for stability, Kermani integrated an important buzzword in the justification of U.S.-supported leaders in the Middle East.

University administrators at the University of Pennsylvania made important strides in helping build departments at Pahlavi University, including the Department of Economics. Moreover, the appointment of Kermani over other potential candidates can be read as an important yet subtle example of the way in which the international context of American universities influenced the field of MES. Indeed, Kermani’s intellectual profile mapped well onto the politics of the shah. Furthermore, Kermani’s conclusions regarding the “proper” way to develop Iran were not uncommon during this period. Many other academics, including Charles Issawi, George Lenczowski, and Jahangir Amuzegar, reflected the sensibilities of Kermani. A final manifestation of the relationship between

⁶⁷ Kermani, *Economic Development in Action*, 45.

⁶⁸ Kermani, *Economic Development in Action*, 46.

Pahlavi's administration and American academics was the scholarship of MES itself, which remained largely uncritical of the Pahlavi regime. By emphasizing the value of oil reserves, which could bring about economic and social modernity in Iran, and by praising the 'political stability' offered by the authoritarian structure of the shah's regime, development theorists and economists aligned their publications with the shah's policy goal of economic modernization. At both the CMES and the MEI, scholars published literature which would advocate the authoritarian modernization of Iran using oil wealth.

Many scholars of Middle Eastern studies during this period were optimistic about the prospect for oil to generate social and economic modernity in oil-centered economies. Charles Issawi, the leading economic historian of the Middle East at Columbia University, was one scholar according to whom oil provided an opportunity for countries in the Middle East to develop according to a Western model. As early as 1952, Issawi referred to petroleum as "the greatest single asset of the Middle East."⁶⁹ For Issawi oil could help Middle Eastern countries break out of the "vicious cycles" that affected the developing countries of the Third World. Scholars at the CMES similarly insisted that oil wealth could help modernize Iran given the right conditions. In 1969, Polk wrote that the unique challenges and possibilities for economic development manifested themselves in the Middle East as oil wealth provided new possibilities for structuring Middle Eastern

⁶⁹ Charles Issawi, "Prospects for Economic Development in the Middle East," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 24, No. 4, International Tensions in the Middle East (1952): 473.

economic development.⁷⁰ “Oil,” he wrote in *The United States and the Arab World*, was “the great exception to generalizations about the Middle East.”⁷¹ In his monograph, he argued that oil endowed the Middle East with endless economic resources in the form of petroleum. In the context of America’s new fuel economy, which placed oil at the center of economic growth, Polk believed that oil reserves had the possibility to transform countries such as Kuwait into a “golden land.”⁷²

However, some scholars of MES believed that oil alone was insufficient for helping bring economic modernity to Iran. Issawi, for example, associated Iran’s economic success with the strong central governance provided by the shah. In 1967, he wrote that the “economic and social progress made by Iran stands plain to see and, given political stability, there is every reason to hope that it can continue, and accelerate, during the next few years.”⁷³ Issawi repeated this sentiment two years later, claiming that if internal stability can be achieved in the Middle East, there were “good grounds for optimism” that the region could see positive economic outcomes.⁷⁴ In short, many

⁷⁰ 50 This analysis was reiterated in works outside other than Polk’s. Kathleen Langley at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University praised the Iraq Development Board’s judicious use of oil revenues for fostering improvements in economic development. George Lenczowski cited the success of the Iranian Plan Organization in allocated oil revenues in order facilitate broad modernization projects that transform the Middle East and its inhabitants on the psychological level.

⁷¹ William Polk, *The United States and the Arab World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969),

⁷² William Polk, *The United States and the Arab World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969),

⁷³ Charles Issawi, “Iran’s Economic Upsurge,” *Middle East Journal*, 21, No. 4 (Autumn, 1967): 459.

⁷⁴ Charles Issawi. “Regional Economies in the 1970s.” in *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 29, No. 3, Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East (May. 1969): 121-136.

development scholars of MES believed that both oil wealth and the autocratic governing structure of the Pahlavi regime would encourage economic growth in Iran.

The causal relationship between the shah's support for MES and development aid from members of the American academic community is nuanced and heterogeneous. At the University of Chicago, academics had few formal commitments to the shah, after the Iranian government withdrew its funding of the Pahlavi building. Given that Polk actively sought support from the shah by traveling to Iran, presenting his work on economic growth in the Middle East to the shah, and characterizing the CMES as largely a development center, it is unlikely that Polk was coaxed into supporting the shah with financial donations from Tehran. Rather, Polk's views aligned with the shah, and the two figures sought a mutually beneficial partnership. However, at the University of Pennsylvania, where the Iranian-American academic alliance was strongest, the pressure to select modernization theorists for professorships was greater. The relationship between institutional dynamics on one hand and scholarship privileging authoritarian modernization on the other hand was more direct in the context of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania partnership.

II

Changes in both state support for academia and the priorities of philanthropic foundations in the late 1960s and early 1970s created financial pressures for area studies writ large, and Middle Eastern studies in particular. MES programs, which faced the threat of closure throughout the 1970s, continued to rely on the shah for financial support.

Moreover, after the oil crisis of 1973, administrators in MES centers further relied on donations from oil companies in order to remain open. Although some scholars within the institutions of MES were critical of both the shah and his relationship with American academia, these voices remained marginal during the 1970s. By analyzing MES in the 1970s, one can observe not only the decreased role of traditional managers of academic production in the social sciences, but also the continued significance of oil and the shah for MES centers. Thus, the history of MES in the 1970s should be read as an example of early privatization of academic research.

An atmosphere of resource deprivation in MES centers began in the late 1960s and lasted throughout the 1970s, as traditional philanthropic foundations, such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, reduced their donations to area studies programs. The withdrawal of Ford Foundation support occurred in large part due to the leadership of McGeorge Bundy, who set a new agenda for the foundation during his time as president. Bundy, who worked as the National Security Advisor for President Kennedy and President Johnson, became the president of the Foundation in 1966. Under Bundy's presidency, the Ford Foundation sought to shift financial support away from area studies programs and toward development projects abroad.⁷⁵ Thus, as Lockman notes, by the late 1960s the Ford Foundation demonstrated, through reduced funding, that "the 'bonanza

⁷⁵ Zachary Lockman (2016-03-30). *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Kindle Locations 4346-4347). Stanford University Press. Kindle Edition.

years' had come to an end and that a new era of more limited resources and slower growth, no growth at all or even retrenchment had begun for area studies."⁷⁶

At Columbia University, the decrease in donations from philanthropic foundations such as the Ford Foundation disproportionately affected the Middle East Institute relative to other area studies programs. In 1973, the administrative committee of the Middle East Institute noted that "the foundations were no longer interested in general funding and would restrict their grants to special projects..."⁷⁷ In 1973, a three-year long grant to the MEI from the Ford Foundation expired, contributing to the depletion of the MEI's financial resources.⁷⁸ The same year that the grant for MES terminated, the Foundation redirected financial resources to the Institute on East Central Asia, contributing a total of \$150,000 to the program.⁷⁹ Finally, the East Asian Studies center at Columbia received a \$600,000 contribution from the Ford Foundation in the mid-1970s.⁸⁰ In brief, the ebb of donations from the Ford Foundation affected the MEI more than it did other centers of graduate study, which continued to enjoy large sums of money from wealthy foundations.

⁷⁶ Zachary Lockman. (2016-03-30). *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Kindle Locations 4361-4363). Stanford University Press. Kindle Edition.

⁷⁷ "Second Meeting of the Administrative Committee of the Middle East Institute." December 19th, 1973. Office of the Provost. Box 140. Middle East Institute. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁷⁸ Summary Report: Ford Foundation Grant to the Middle East Institute, July 1973. Central Files, Series II: 1971-1972. Box 692, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁷⁹ Howard Dressner to William McGill, August 10, 1973. Central Files, Series IV: 1973-1974. Box 736, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁸⁰ William McGill to McGeorge Bundy, April 28, 1975. Central Files, Series V: 1974-1975. Box 756, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

The withdrawal of federal support for academia in general, and Middle Eastern studies in particular, further contributed to the privatization of funding for MES centers in the 1970s. The economist and historian of science Philip Mirowski argues that U.S. federal support for academic research began to fall in 1967, reversing the previous notion that the state should fund academic research.⁸¹ There are several explanations for the decrease in support from the U.S. government for area studies centers during this period. First, recessions in 1969-1970 and 1973-1975 restricted the federal budget. Second, student protests against the Vietnam war and the rise of the New Left in American academia created a felt distance between the federal government from universities. For example, protests at Columbia propelled the university into the national spotlight in 1968 and lasted for several years afterward.⁸² In 1972, a group of professors from the School of International Affairs, including Hurewitz, wrote to President McGill claiming that the student protesters threatened the physical safety of the faculty.⁸³ In this political atmosphere, conservative politicians were inclined to reduce funding for higher education, and in 1971 the Nixon administration reduced Title VI funding from \$12.85 million to \$7.17 million.⁸⁴ To Mirowski, this reduction in federal support was part of a broader movement in which the government distanced itself from the responsibility of

⁸¹ Philip Mirowski. *Science-Mart* (Kindle Locations 284-285). Kindle Edition.

⁸² Blake Slonecker. 2008. "The Columbia Coalition: African Americans, New Leftists, and Counterculture at the Columbia University Protests of 1968." *Journal Of Social History* 41, no. 4: 967. MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed March 19, 2017).

⁸³ Petition from the staff of the School of International Affairs to President McGill, April 25th, 1972. Central Files, 1971-1972. Box 692. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁸⁴ Lockman, Zachary (2016-03-30). *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States*. (Kindle Locations 4353-4363). Stanford University Press. Kindle Edition

educating its citizens, instead “[seeking] to reengineer democracy by privatizing” the education of citizens, and by turning universities into service industries.⁸⁵ In short, the Nixon administration engendered new period in which the state played a smaller role in the supply of education and production of knowledge.

To an extent, the financial problems that the political developments posed were not exclusive to Middle Eastern studies but instead affected area studies writ large. When Congress failed to maintain a high level of funding for area studies programs in 1968, Andrew Cordier, the Dean at the Columbia University, insisted that it is “in the national interest to keep our international programs on American campuses from shrinking or dying from lack of funds.”⁸⁶ He moreover lamented that “the amount of money to be appropriated [for area studies centers in America] is small.”⁸⁷ He and President Grayson Kirk of Columbia University circulated a letter to sixty-four university presidents urging congress to “extend the authority under which this program is supported and to augment federal contribution to its financing.”⁸⁸ The letter warned that the “most serious problem in this program is inadequate financing,” given that “the costs of Language and Area Studies have risen faster than the average increase in the expense of higher education.”⁸⁹ University presidents including George Beadle and Grayson Kirk submitted this letter to

⁸⁵ Philip Mirowski. *Science-Mart* (Kindle Locations 311-313). Kindle Edition.

⁸⁶ Memorandum. Andrew Cordier to George Beadle, January 29, 1969. University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 253, Folder 8], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

members of Congress and President Johnson. In short, several university presidents believed that the the retrenchment of federal support would broadly affect area studies.

The U.S. government's relative neglect of Middle Eastern studies compared to other area studies programs further exacerbated the receding federal support for universities writ large. In 1970, the federal government awarded merely 14 Graduate Fellowships to students at the Middle East Institute at Columbia, compared with 18 at the Latin American Institute, 26 at the Russian and East Central Europe Institutes, and 51 at the East Asian Institute.⁹⁰ The MES centers at the University of Washington and the University of Chicago similar had relatively weak federal support compared to centers for Russian studies and East Asian studies.⁹¹ In 1969, Middle Eastern studies centers in America received merely \$672,550 in federal support, compared to \$851,630 for Latin American studies, \$1,217,203 for Russian and Eastern European studies, and \$2,497,418 for South and Far East Asian studies.⁹² Like the foundations, the federal government similarly supported centers for MES to a lesser extent than it supported other regional studies programs.

As Osamah Khalil notes, it remains a historical paradox that the state would withdrawal funding for Middle Eastern studies centers despite the increasing Cold War significance of the Middle East during the 1970s.⁹³ Two possibilities can help explain this phenomenon. First, despite the geopolitical importance of the Middle East, the United

⁹⁰ University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 260, Folder 2], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Khalil, *America's Dream Palace*, 292.

States was embroiled in ‘hot’ conflicts that rendered knowledge production in regions other than the Middle East more immediately relevant. Specifically, the Vietnam conflict escalated in the late 1960s, creating a political climate that might privilege South Asian studies over MES. The international rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union moreover increased the importance of Russian studies programs relative to other regional disciplines. Thus, although the Middle East remained a significant region in terms of U.S. foreign policy, knowledge production on Latin America, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam might have taken precedence. Second, scholars began to produce knowledge on the Middle East outside of the institutions of MES, contributing to the diminishing importance of academia to the national security state. Think tanks such as the Brookings Institution, for example, began to study the Middle East in the 1970s, emphasizing the role of the United States in maintaining regional peace and stability.⁹⁴

The decisions of the Ford Foundation and the federal government to reduce support for Middle Eastern studies created an atmosphere of resource privation in the MES centers at both Chicago and Columbia. During this period, administrators of both the MEI and the CMES believed that their institutions’ existence was contingent on the small amounts of support they received from private sources. Professor John Woods at the University of Chicago stated that a main tension for the CMES during the 1970s was its financial struggle, which presented an existential threat to the Center.⁹⁵ Charles Issawi

⁹⁴ Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace*, 222-223.

⁹⁵ John Woods (Professor at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies), interview by William Krause at the University of Chicago on May 25th, 2016.

emphasized this deprivation at Columbia in 1973 when he wrote in a letter to the administrative committee of the MEI that “the main objective of the Middle East Institute for the next few years can be stated simply: survival.”⁹⁶ Hurewitz similarly commented on the privation of the MEI. He wrote that the center “suffered severe budgetary constriction because of the continued slackening of federal and foundational support for international programs and the readily mounting costs of operation and tuition.”⁹⁷ An annual report for the academic year 1974-1975 wrote that “the Center is on the verge of becoming moribund” and that “the Columbia Center has been reduced to an uncertain and possibly nonviable program.”⁹⁸ Two years later, Hurewitz explained that “the large foundations and the federal government” have withdrawn the “support that enabled the Institute to keep abreast of developments.”⁹⁹

As a result of the withdrawal of support from traditional sources such as the Ford Foundation and the federal government, administrators and academics continued to orient themselves toward the shah and other private financial sources, pursuing relationships with Iran until the eve of the revolution. At Chicago, the lingering memory of the shah’s large-scale donation had an affect on administrators of the CMES. Despite the failure of

⁹⁶ Charles Issawi. “To the Administrative Committee of the Middle East Institute.” June 5th, 1974. Office of the Provost. Box 140. Middle East Institute. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁹⁷ J.C. Hurewitz to Richard E. Salomon, March 6, 1974. Central Files, Series IV: 1973-1974. Box 736, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁹⁸ Annual Report, Middle East Institute. Central Files, 1974-1975. Box 756, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

⁹⁹ J.C. Hurewitz to Alexander Lewis, January 30, 1976. Records of the Office of the Provost, Box 140, Middle East Institute. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

the Pahlavi Building, administrators in Chicago held onto the promise of an additional donation from the shah during the 1970s. Edward Levi wrote in a 1974 letter that although the shah withdrew his financial support, there was nevertheless “some suggestion that at a later time the government of Iran might consider a gift to the University for Iranian studies.”¹⁰⁰

Administrators at Columbia similarly turned toward the shah for financial assistance. In 1973, Issawi expressed his belief that “with the vast increase in the revenues of the oil producing countries of the Middle East, some additional funds [to the Institute] may be forthcoming in the future.”¹⁰¹ Scholars in the MEI, according to Issawi, continued trying “to obtain funds from two Middle Eastern governments, those of Kuwait and Iran,” applying for a \$1.6 million grant from the Pahlavi Foundation.¹⁰² Although this proposal “stalled” upon arrival in Tehran, and was ultimately ignored, administrators at Columbia perceived the Pahlavi regime as a wealthy and potentially helpful resource. Other universities similarly enjoyed donations from the Iranian government; Princeton, for example, received a \$400,000 donation to create a Pahlavi Endowment for Iranian Studies.¹⁰³ These universities, however, were merely several of fifty-five other higher

¹⁰⁰ Edward H. Levi to Michael T. Sawyer, February 1, 1974. ¹⁰⁰ University of Chicago. Office of the President. Levi Administration. Records, [Box 68, Folder 3], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

¹⁰¹ Annual Report, Middle East Institute. Central Files, Series V: 1974-1975. Box 756, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹⁰² Annual Report, Middle East Institute. Central Files, Series V: 1974-1975. Box 756, Institutes and Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹⁰³ Zachary Lockman (2016-03-30). *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Kindle Locations 4458-4459). Stanford University Press. Kindle Edition.

educational institutions to which the shah donated.¹⁰⁴ Given that MES was not a priority in the eyes of traditional donors such as the U.S. government and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, scholars of MES oriented themselves toward the shah as a nontraditional financial resource.

Columbia University maintained a relationship with Iran up until the eve of the revolution, and the MEI kept economic development as a primary academic goal. In 1977, Columbia gave the Shahbanou of Iran Farah Pahlavi the Preisdential Citation of Distinction. In President William McGill's letter inviting Pahlavi to Columbia, he described the University as "the cradle of Iranian studies in the United States and...an institution which has maintained continuous and fruitful ties with your country..."¹⁰⁵ Further, McGill lauded Pahlavi's "vigorous support of artistic endeavors in Iran" and her "dedication to the cause of humane values in the midst of overriding technological and economic exigencies." He closed the letter explaining how both Farah Pahlavi and Muhammad Reza Shah's "tremendous effort for progress and self-sufficiency" had "been a constant source of inspiration for public service."¹⁰⁶ McGill thus praised Pahlavi's efforts to render Western-style political modernity in Iran. Although one Columbia graduate called to protest the event, the general silence among members of the MEI hints at the underlying ideological consensus among most within the field.

¹⁰⁴ Khalil, *America's Dream Palace*, 229.

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum. William McGill to Farah Pahlavi, July 7, 1977. Central Files. Series VIII, Box 812. Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Administrators at the University of Pennsylvania similarly continued their relationship with Pahlavi University until 1979. In the early 1970s, state officials, members of other Iranian institutions, and academics involved in the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania project expressed satisfaction with the partnership between the two universities. Administrators from other Iranian universities looked with envy at the arrangement between Pahlavi and Pennsylvania. Harnwell wrote that, between 1962 and 1970, “we have been approached by three Iranian institutions making inquiry as to whether we would be willing to conclude contractual arrangements to provide a variety of services.”¹⁰⁷ For example, Jundi Shaper University and Pars College both contacted Max Copeland to inquire whether a similar setup could be arranged.¹⁰⁸ Harnwell and Copeland eventually turned such offers down, knowing that administrators in Shiraz wished the Pennsylvania team devote its resources to Pahlavi University. When Copeland spoke with the shah at a Department of State luncheon, Pahlavi expressed “very nice words” for “our program in Shiraz.”¹⁰⁹ Harnwell agreed with the shah, claiming that “our affiliation with Pahlavi University has been beneficial for both institutions...”¹¹⁰ Finally, the administration at the University of Pennsylvania expressed satisfaction with their

¹⁰⁷ Gaylord Harnwell to Hooshang Nahavandi, January 28, 1970. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹⁰⁸ Max Copeland to Gaylord Harnwell. June 29, 1972. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹⁰⁹ Gaylord Harnwell to Assodolah Alam. November 4, 1969. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹⁰ Gaylord Harnwell to Assodolah Alam. November 4, 1969. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

work in helping modernize education in Iran. Meanwhile, in 1969, Assadollah Alam - the former Prime Minister of Iran who subsequently served as the president of Pahlavi University - invited Harnwell to Shiraz to receive an honorary degree from Pahlavi University.¹¹¹ In 1970, Harnwell circulated a congratulatory newspaper article in the Philadelphia Inquirer that praised the shah's so-called White Revolution. The author wrote that the shah's reform was "one of the great success stories of the decade," given that it had "done wonders for the economy."¹¹² That Harnwell thought to send an article praising the shah's modernizing reforms to the Pennsylvania team suggests that he believed their work fit into the shah's overarching 'revolutionary' development policies.

Further, Gaylord Harnwell and Martin Meyerson - the new president of the University of Pennsylvania - worked to maintain the arrangement. In July, 1971, Meyerson renewed the contract for a period of five years beginning in 1972.¹¹³ The central components of the new contract included "the strengthening of undergraduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, the setting up of further advanced courses in the Medical School, and the inauguration of a doctoral program in the Engineering School."¹¹⁴ Two years later, Meyerson made plans to travel to Iran, communicating that

¹¹¹ Assadollah Alam to Gaylord Harnwell. November 12, 1969. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹² Edwin Leane. "Shah of Iran Leads Own 'Revolution.'" January 26, 1970. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Box 296, folder 5. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran-Pahlavi University. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹³ Memorandum. Martin Meyerson and Farhang Mehr. June 19, 1973.

¹¹⁴ ALMANAC, September 14, 1971. in UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Box 296. Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

he believed “more effort should be spent on implementing the Arrangement between the two universities.”¹¹⁵ In June 1973, Meyerson wrote directly to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, explaining how Meyerson and Harnwell were “ready to cooperate” in the “important undertaking” of developing advanced studies at Pahlavi University.¹¹⁶ According to an Iranian ambassador, the shah responded to this summary favorably, expressing his “sincere desire that the strong ties which exist between Pahlavi University and the University of Pennsylvania continue to grow.”¹¹⁷ The shah and Martin Meyerson both wanted to see the continuation of the Pahlavi-Pennsylvania agreement.

What is more, during Meyerson’s visit to Pahlavi in the summer of 1973, he met with Chancellor Farhang Mehr, and they drafted a set of informal recommendations to help continue a smooth partnership between the two universities. The recommendations included developing the library collections at Pahlavi University, privileging exchange students from those two universities during admissions processes, and keeping the University of Pennsylvania as Pahlavi University’s main contact in America for the remainder of the contract.¹¹⁸ In short, administrators at both schools maintained a successful partnership through the 1970s; developers at the University of Pennsylvania

¹¹⁵ Gaylord Harnwell to Bruce Johnstone, February 27th, 1973. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers, Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹⁶ Martin Meyerson to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. July 23, 1973. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Box 296. Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹⁷ Memorandum. 14 August, 1973. to Martin Meyerson. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Box 296. Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum. Martin Meyerson and Farhang Mehr. June 19, 1973. UPA 4 Martin Meyerson Papers. Inter-Institutional Cooperation Programs, Box 296. Iran- Pahlavi University II. University of Pennsylvania Special Collections.

continued to aid educational development in Iran and received the attention and approval of the shah.

The intellectual harmony between the shah and development scholars continued throughout the decade. As Columbia, Chicago, and Pennsylvania continued to cultivate relationships with the Iranian government, scholars of MES continued to provide ideological and technical support for the shah. The same year that Farah Pahlavi was invited to Columbia, the MEI, which sponsored weekly University Seminars attended by prominent executives, government officials, and foreign representatives, made the focus of its University Seminar series “Economic Development: Directions and Difficulties.” Development scholars Firouz Vakil and Hollis Chenery, another economist who worked at the United States Agency for International Development, were among those invited to speak about the past and future prospects for economic development in the Middle East and Iran.¹¹⁹ Administrators and scholars at the MEI showed little signs of relinquishing the development agenda they had set as early as 1955.

Further, academics at the MEI continued to argue that a strong central government endowed with oil wealth could help bring economic modernity to Iran. In 1970, Issawi cited petroleum as the solution to the problem of underdevelopment in the Middle East. He claimed that early British intervention created “a deep feeling of discouragement” in the Middle East and contributed to the “sucking out of vast sums from the region in the

¹¹⁹ J.C. Hurewitz to Ray C. Kooi, December 15, 1977. Central Files. Series VIII, Box 812. Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

form of payments and dividends.”¹²⁰ Issawi’s gloomy narrative of underdevelopment, war, rapid population growth, and low resources abruptly ended with the discovery of oil. “Fortunately for the Middle East,” he concluded, “it got a second chance, in the form of the discovery of its oil resources and a huge amount of foreign aid, and this is enabling it today to carry out a new programme of industrialization and modernization of its economy and society.”¹²¹ Petroleum was, quite literally in Issawi’s narrative, the savior of the Middle East.

At the CMES as well, scholars of MES continued to publish works that commended the development of Iran through oil wealth and centralized politics. In 1971, economists Jahangir Amuzegar and M. Ali Fekrat, who published a book as part of a series on Middle Eastern studies in Chicago, elaborated potential problems with oil-centered economies. In their work, they described the potential dangers of oil wealth. According to them, foreign-based industries therefore create national economies with two sharply distinct sectors: “a highly developed, capital-intensive, usually raw materials sector, and a relatively underdeveloped, slow moving indigenous sector.”¹²² Amuzegar and Fekrat believed that, if not properly integrated into the Iranian economy, the oil industry would simply reinforce the chasm between Iran’s traditional and traditionally-

¹²⁰ Charles Issawi. “Middle East Economic Development, 1815-1914: The General and the Specific.” in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the rise of Islam to the Present Day*, ed. M.A. Cook, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 411.

¹²¹ Issawi. “Middle East Economic Development,” 411.

¹²² Amuzegar and Fekrat, *Iran: Development Under Dualistic Conditions*, 6.

oriented sectors and thus fail to encourage growth evenly across all sections of Iranian society.

Amuzegar and Fekrat wrote that the degree to which the dynamic sector, or the petroleum industry in the case of Iran, could be integrated into the rest of the economy depended not only on the revenues from the foreign-financed enclave but also on the strength of the shah's leadership to invest those revenues into the "traditional" and "domestic" sectors.¹²³ Without the benevolent yet heavy-handed direction of the shah, Amuzegar and Fekrat believed that further development of the petroleum industry would crack the Iranian economy into two distinct sectors: "a highly developed, capital-intensive, usually raw materials sector, and a relatively underdeveloped, slow moving indigenous sector."¹²⁴ The strong central rule of the shah, for Amuzegar and Fekrat, helped artificially link sectors of the Iranian economy such that development of the oil industry could encourage balanced growth. The Fekrat-Amuzegar model was a synthesis of the postwar development theories of Albert Hirschmann and Ragnar Nurkse.

While Amuzegar and Fekrat's study connected Iran's economic success and its strong central rule, other development economists drew this link even more explicitly. In a book review, USAID economist Maxwell Fry wrote that the analysis of Amuzegar and Fekrat would have been improved had they given more attention to "the economic impact of strong central government since the 1920s," which endowed Iran with the appropriate

¹²³ Amuzegar and Fekrat, *Iran*, 1971.

¹²⁴ Jahangir Amuzegar and M. Ali Fekrat, *Iran: Economic Development under Dualistic Conditions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972): 6.

governance structure for acquiring and distributing large oil revenues.¹²⁵ Thus, George Lenczowski did not depart from the mainstream trends within MES in the 1970s when he wrote that the shah's rule constituted a "broad attack in every conceivable sector against the old ills of Iranian society," and that the White Revolution lifted Iran out of "backwardness to a higher level of strength and modernity."¹²⁶

Despite the general intellectual harmony between American academics and the shah, individuals within these institutions did not unanimously support the shah and his relationship with American academia. Many students, for example, remained highly critical of the shah. In one instance, a graduate of Columbia denounced the university's connection with Iran, comparing Farah Pahlavi to Eva Braun and claiming that the administration was "desperate for the Shah's money."¹²⁷ Student protesters at Columbia and Pennsylvania also resisted the administrative connections with the shah.¹²⁸ However forceful in their opposition to the shah's presence on American universities, these voices did not prevent administrators and scholars from associating with the Iranian government.

Academics similarly criticized the shah's policy goal of modernization from a variety of perspectives. For example, Hossein Mahdavi, a development economist from Harvard, laid the foundation for rentier theory in 1970 when he criticized Iran's reliance

¹²⁵ Maxwell Fry, "The Economic History of Iran 1800-1914/ *Iran : Economic Development under Dualistic Conditions*." *Economic Journal* 83, no. 330 (June 1973): 616-621.

¹²⁶ Lenczowski, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, xxii.

¹²⁷ Memorandum. July 12th, 1977. Series VIII. Box 812, Regional Institutes & Iran. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹²⁸ Hunger strike by Penn students in protest of the Shah and of Iranian repression, news clipping, April 24th, 1978. University Archives Digital Image Collection. University of Pennsylvania Archives. Permanent link: <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/archives/20070613029>.

on oil revenue. In 1964, Mahdavi, who disliked Pahlavi's rule, quit the Iranian Plan Organization to study industrial development at Harvard University.¹²⁹ He theorized that the government's over-reliance on revenues from oil exportation presented a unique set of constraints for growth that do not exist in non-oil exporting countries. Instead of sidestepping the problems associated with economic development, he insisted that oil wealth presented a new set of problems when injected into underdeveloped countries: vast wealth was concentrated into the hands of a small population, the state was largely independent from the people over which it governed, and broad sectors of the population were unaffected by slow-moving industrialization.¹³⁰ While his theory gained almost no traction after its immediate release, many prominent theorists returned to it after the revolution. Theda Skocpol, in 'Rentier State and Shi'a Islam,' admitted that Mahdavi's rentier thesis did much of the conceptual work for her. In 1982, Jahangir Amuzegar similarly questioned whether oil wealth, when combined with a strong central government, would be able to encourage economic growth. The fact that these scholars began to work with rentier theory only after the Iranian Revolution reinforces the argument that oil and the shah were important factors in the politics of knowledge in MES centers.

¹²⁹ Matthew K. Shannon, "American-Iranian Alliances: International Education, Modernization, and Human Rights during the Pahlavi Era" in *Diplomatic History* 39, No. 4 (2015).

¹³⁰ Hossein Mahdavi, "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: the Case of Iran" in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. M.A. Cook (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1970).

Aside from the shah, administrators of Middle Eastern studies centers also turned toward oil corporations such as Exxon, Mobil, and Texaco for financial support. As J.C. Hurewitz explained, “the Institute in recent years has been moving away from dependence on the large foundations and the US government toward corporations that have become increasingly active in the Middle East.”¹³¹ In 1973, Hurewitz wrote that the initial gift from Charles Hedlund, the President of Esso Middle East, of \$10,000 “literally left me speechless.”¹³² After this initial donation, the administration of the MEI observed that it would be useful “to use Exxon’s interest to reach out to other oil companies and business interest,” especially given that “Columbia was the only major school that had not received grants from the oil companies.”¹³³ By 1977, the yearly donations from Exxon and Texaco amounted to around \$30,000 in total.¹³⁴ Further, Texaco did not limit its donations to the MEI but rather expanded “its support to the various institutes and expanding its involvement with other worthy causes in the Middle East.”¹³⁵ Exxon, Mobil, and Texaco did not limit their gifts to the MEI, and continued donating to regional studies programs throughout the 1980s.

¹³¹ J.C. Hurewitz to George A. Delhomme. November 7th, 1977. Box 812. Regional Institutes. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹³² J.C. Hurewitz to Charles Hedlund. December 6th, 1973. Office of the Provost. Box 140. 1953-2006. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹³³ “Second Meeting of the Administrative Committee of the Middle East Institute.” December 19th, 1973. Office of the Provost. Box 140. Middle East Institute. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹³⁴ J.C. Hurewitz, “The Shift from Foundation to Corporate Support, 1971-1979.” 1980. Office of the Provost, 1953-2006. Box 486. Middle East Institute. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

¹³⁵ Robert Shields to J.C. Hurewitz. March 26th, 1979. University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

Private interests, specifically the Iranian government and later oil corporations, thus became important resources for Middle Eastern studies as philanthropic foundations and the federal government receded their support at the beginning of the 1970s. Despite critical voices denouncing the shah's participation in knowledge production in America, many academics within centers of MES continued to support the shah's policy goal of modernization up until the Iranian revolution.

In 1979, the shah lost control over Iran. Despite having the support of members in the Johnson and Nixon administrations, his White Revolution created more social tension than it solved. These problems manifested themselves in the form of nation-wide protests that culminated in the removal of the shah in 1979 and the usurpation by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic reactionary leader. The shah's experiment with economic modernization in form of the White Revolution came to an end.

During the Iranian revolution, the relationship between the shah and American academics collapsed. The Pahlavi-Pennsylvania contract expired in 1978 and, although the agreement was renewed on two previous occasions, the team at Pennsylvania opted not to sign a new contract. Meanwhile, administrators at Columbia similarly turned away from Pahlavi's regime. John Woods, a professor at the CMES, insisted that the administration at the University of Chicago sought to remove their association with the shah by claiming that the university rejected the shah's financial support.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ John Woods (Professor at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies), interview by William Krause at the University of Chicago on May 25th, 2016.

As the Pahlavi-American academic coalition deteriorated in the wake of the revolution, several other fundamental changes occurred in the field of MES. In the late 1970s, critics of Orientalism assailed the mainstream trends in their field. Journals and publications such as *The Middle East Research and Information Project* (MERIP), *Khamsin*, and the *Review of Middle East Studies* emerged throughout the 1970s, each elaborating a critique of what they saw as the reductive and simplistic tendencies of Orientalism and, by extension, MES.¹³⁷ Waves of new scholars such as Roger Owen and Talal Assad challenged the perceived dominance of orientalist stereotypes in MES. They accused figures like Hamilton Gibb of being “intellectually isolated, under-critical, and lacking any methodological tools other than antiquated philology.”¹³⁸ For Khalil, too, the increasing challenge of Orientalism meant turmoil in the field of MES writ large. Such a critique partially explains why the federal government pivoted toward think tanks in order to justify foreign policy expertise.¹³⁹ Edward Said’s 1978 publication, *Orientalism*, was broadly influential in developing and popularizing this critique. In his book, Said argued that every Western academic institution, book, and image representing the Middle East does so in a way that reinforces the political relationship between Western colonial powers and Middle Eastern colonial subjects.¹⁴⁰ He attacked prominent Orientalists such as Bernard Lewis, insisting that their work stereotyped and essentialized people in the Middle East and painted the Middle East as a timeless and unchanging region. Said’s

¹³⁷ Lockman, *Contending Visions*, 163-167.

¹³⁸ Lockman, *Contending Visions*, 166.

¹³⁹ Khalil, *America’s Dream Palace*, 214.

¹⁴⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

critique of the field fortuitously coincided with the collapse of the shah's regime and, with it, a decade-long tradition of scholarship emphasizing the possibility of economic development and modernization by the shah.

Outside of Middle Eastern studies, the fall of the shah also coincided with the rise of Islamic studies in the United States. Islamic studies was the third wave of scholarship to cover the geographic region of the Middle East, following Orientalism and Middle Eastern studies. Between 1983 and 1992, several Islamic studies programs emerged in American universities, and the percentage of theses on Islam rose drastically during the Iranian revolution.¹⁴¹ Following 9/11, that number ballooned even further with Islamic studies cropping up at many major American institutions. The need to create Islamic studies during this period suggests that many development-oriented Middle Eastern studies programs were ill-equipped for the academic study of Islam.¹⁴² The rise of the new discipline of Islamic studies following the end of the U.S.-Iranian academic relationship thus suggests that Middle Eastern studies as a discipline did not sufficiently address the topic of religion.

In many ways, the unique history of Middle Eastern studies in the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated the limitations of area studies as an academic model. Area studies, which emerged during and immediately after the Second World War, were intended to provide non-ideological and apolitical expertise to policymakers who could moreover

¹⁴¹ Charles Kurzman and Carl W. Ernst. "Islamic Studies in U.S. Universities." in *Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Summer 2012): 27-29.

¹⁴² Kurzman and Ernst, "Islamic Studies," 26.

utilize that expertise to promote U.S. global hegemony during the Cold War period. There were many flaws in this model. The grouping together of a host of different cultures, nations, and societies quickly became a political project, given that many inhabitants of these so-called regions do not see themselves as part of a coherent community. Thus, regional boundaries were drawn in relation to America rather than based on any inherent local continuity. Moreover, as many academics have previously suggested, to argue that the scholarship of area studies programs was apolitical and non-ideological would be to take the rhetoric of midcentury American liberalism at face value. Whether they acted as agents of U.S. global hegemony or voiced dissent, regionalists were often defined based on their relationship to America's foreign policy apparatus and the mainstream political liberalism that helped inform it, both of which were ideological in nature.¹⁴³ Many regional scholars wrote works that interested political and ideological actors.

Although the involvement of the state posed many problems for academia, the withdrawal of federal funding introduced new political challenges for both Middle Eastern studies and universities writ large. Many recent scholars have argued that, since the 1970s, colleges and universities have begun acting as neoliberal institutions by

¹⁴³ On the relationship between the state and area studies, see Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War," in *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences during the Cold War*, ed. Christopher Simpson (New York: The New Press, 1998), 159–188; Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Vincent Rafael, "Regionalism, Area Studies, and the Accidents of Agency," *The American Historical Review* 104, No. 4 (1999): 1209.

regarding students as consumers and research as a private commodity. These scholars contend that American universities are much less concerned with economic mobility than they are with producing research that is useful for knowledge-based industries and preparing undergraduates for professional roles. Moreover, private interests such as corporations and foreign governments continue to contribute to universities, which have seen a decreased level of support from the federal government and philanthropic foundations. Many scholars argue that both the corporate model for higher education and the role of private interests in knowledge production have an adverse impact on the quality of scholarship produced within academic institutions.¹⁴⁴

Many administrators and scholars in Middle Eastern studies programs worked under similar conditions in the 1970s: the withdrawal of federal and philanthropic support occurred in the 1970s, creating an atmosphere of deprivation that foreshadowed the contingency that is standard in many contemporary universities. In turn, they were forced to rely on private sources of support in order to keep their centers open, drawing money from the very regions over which they claimed expertise. In our current atmosphere of resource deprivation, it is becoming increasingly important to reconstruct past stories in which administrators and academics struggled to keep institutions afloat. With the rise of

¹⁴⁴ For more on the neoliberal university, see: Phillip Mirowski, *Science-Mart* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011); Christopher Newfield, *The Great Mistake: How We Wrecked Public Universities and How We Can Fix Them* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016); Jennifer Washburn, *University, Inc: The Corporate Corruption of American Higher Education* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Larry G. Gerber, *The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance: Professionalization and the Modern American University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); Shiela Slaughter and Gary Rhoades. "The Neo-Liberal University." *New Labor Forum*, no. 6 (2000): 73-79. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40342886>.

contingent faculty, the increasing involvement of private interests in academic research, and debates regarding the role of science in national and international politics, we can observe uncertainty regarding the relationship between knowledge and politics in contemporary American society.

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